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The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development

Strengthening further the Economic and Social Council, building on its recent achievements, to help it fulfil the role ascribed to it in the Charter of the United Nations as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B

Consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 2002**

Report of the Secretary-General

Executive summary

The present report aims at assisting the Council in providing policy guidance to its functional commissions and in coordinating their work. It accordingly identifies linkages, common themes and coordination issues arising from the work of the commissions in 2002. The first section of the report addresses substantive aspects of the commissions' work, while the second provides an overview of the procedural aspects of their work, including their working methods and interaction among the commissions as well as with the Council. It also analyses the practice of the functional commissions in the preparation of draft resolutions for action by the Council and the General Assembly. The report contains a number of recommendations for consideration by the Council in that regard.

* E/2002/100 and Add.1.

** The present report was submitted after the expiration of the deadline for submission of reports to the Economic and Social Council. The delay was caused by the fact that some of the Council's functional commissions, whose work the report is analysing, concluded their annual sessions after expiration of the deadline. Thereafter, the commission's outcome documents had to be extensively analysed for inclusion in the report.

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Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
	Introduction	1	3
I.	**Substantive aspects of the work of the commissions in 2002**	2–39	3
	A. **Follow-up by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2001**	2–3	3
	B. **Analysis of common themes and issues in the commissions in 2002**	4–38	3
	C. **Recommendations**	39	7
II.	**Procedural aspects of the work of the commissions in 2002**	40–76	8
	A. **Developments regarding the multi-year work programmes of the functional commissions in 2002**	40	8
	B. **Analysis of the practice of the functional commissions in the preparation of draft resolutions for action by the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly**	41–49	8
	C. **Recommendations**	50	10
	D. **Working methods, including intersessional activities**	51–62	10
	E. **Coordination among functional commissions and their secretariats**	63–73	12
	F. **Cooperation with the Council (outcomes of joint bureaux meetings)**	74–75	13
	G. **Recommendation**	76	13

Introduction

1. Like reports in previous years, the present report aims at identifying linkages, complementarities and common themes, as well as gaps and overlaps, in the work of the functional commissions to assist the Council in providing policy guidance to the commissions and in coordinating their work.[1] It provides an overview of their working methods and of the interaction among the commissions as well as with the Council.[2] It should be read in conjunction with conference room paper (E/2002/CRP.3).

I. Substantive aspects of the work of the commissions in 2002

A. Follow-up by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2001

2. The President of the Council informed the chairpersons of the functional commissions on the outcomes of the Council's substantive session of 2001 in a letter dated 8 October 2001. A detailed analysis of the follow-up by the commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2001 is contained in conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3.

3. In general, the functional commissions have acted on the Council's guidance. As the Council requested, some commissions have provided an input to the Council's 2002 high-level segment. The follow-up to the ministerial declaration of the Council's 2001 high-level segment on the role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development (see A/56/3, chap. III, para. 29) has not been addressed per se by the commissions' outcome documents. The Council might accordingly invite its commissions to enhance further their attention to African countries and least developed countries, as a way to maintain the focus on implementing the commitments emanating from the United Nations Millennium Declaration[3] and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (recommendations 1, 2 and 3 (d)).

B. Analysis of common themes and issues in the commissions in 2002

4. The present section analyses common themes, issues and approaches in the substantive work of the functional commissions. It focuses on aspects relating to sustainable development, poverty, ageing and health and education. A fuller analysis of other common issues addressed by the commissions is contained in conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3.

5. The key issues before the three major conferences scheduled for 2002 — the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Second World Assembly on Ageing and the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development — have been addressed extensively by the commissions.

6. Poverty eradication has continued to be a major focus of the functional commissions, especially in the perspective of the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The commissions have also addressed important policy issues concerning health, notably human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and education, and this should contribute to the Council's high-level segment of 2002.

7. Information and communication technologies (ICT) also remain of high priority in the agenda of most commissions. The Council's 2001 coordination segment helped maintain the ICT focus in their work. Likewise, gender equality has continued to be addressed by most commissions, revealing steady progress in mainstreaming gender considerations[4] (recommendations 3 (g) and (h)).

8. As in previous years, the functional commissions have sought to contribute, through their work, to the debate on the building of an enabling environment for development and spreading the benefits of globalization. They have addressed in this context issues relating to macroeconomic policy frameworks conducive to development, external debt, official development assistance (ODA) and financing for development, and international trade as well as capacity-building. The outcomes of the Doha World Trade Organization Fourth Ministerial Conference and the International Conference on Financing for Development and their relevance to advancing social and gender equality goals should be taken into account

by the commissions in their further consideration of these issues (recommendation 3 (a)).

9. It is important that the Council support the efforts of the functional commissions to integrate the follow-up to the United Nations Millennium Declaration in their programmes of work. In this regard, the report of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration will have as themes for 2003, financing for development and strategies for sustainable development, and in 2004, bridging the digital divide and curbing transnational crime (see A/56/326, para. 306). The next consolidated report could analyse the work of the functional commissions in relation to these issues. This would allow the Council to guide the work of the commissions and mobilize them in the follow-up of the Millennium Declaration.

1. Sustainable development

10. The Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development undertook a comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21[5] and the other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its five-year review.

11. Meanwhile, several commissions chose themes specifically aiming to make substantial contributions to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Commission on the Status of Women adopted agreed conclusions on environmental management and mitigation of natural disasters: a gender perspective. It is the first document negotiated at the intergovernmental level that looks at environmental management and natural disasters from a gender perspective in a comprehensive way. It recognizes notably the need to enhance women's capacities, and for institutional mechanisms to respond to disasters.

12. At its second session, the United Nations Forum on Forests adopted a ministerial declaration and Message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (see A/CONF.199/PC/8, annex).

13. The Commission on Human Rights, at its fifty-eighth session, adopted resolution 2002/75 on human rights and the environment as part of sustainable development, in connection with the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the holding of expert meetings on the topic. In resolution 2002/27, the Commission urged the international community and the relevant United Nations bodies to give appropriate support to developing countries to implement the provisions of existing international and regional instruments controlling the transboundary movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products.

14. Agenda 21 addresses needs for regular data and information. The Statistical Commission at its thirty-third session emphasized the need to publish as soon as possible the revised Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting handbook; and welcomed the proposal of the London Group on Environmental Accounting to continue to work on the development of methodological and practical handbooks to assist in the implementation of environmental-economic accounts.[6]

15. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its eleventh session, noted the adverse environmental, economic, social and scientific impact of transnational organized criminal activities related to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna and of the consequences of access to genetic resources on other than mutually agreed terms.

16. The Commission for Social Development at its fortieth session for its part addressed the integration of social and economic policy as the priority theme for 2002 and thus contributed relevant analyses and recommendations on key dimensions of the sustainable development problematique.

17. Thus, the commissions in their work are addressing diverse elements that are directly relevant to policy development in furthering the achievement of the overall goal of sustainable development. However, the environmental dimension could be more effectively integrated into the work of some commissions (recommendation 3 (c)).

2. Ageing

18. The Commission for Social Development served as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, which was held in Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002. The World Assembly adopted a Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, which committed Governments to acting to meet the challenge of population ageing and provided recommendations, covering three main priority directions: older persons

and development, advancing health and well-being into old age, and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. Both documents will guide the thinking and action on ageing in the years to come.

19. The Commission on Population and Development has been examining and assessing the trends, determinants and consequences of ageing for a number of years. The report of the Secretary-General on programme implementation and progress of work in the field of population in 2001: Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (see E/CN.9/2002/5) includes brief information on the issue of population ageing. The Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat prepared a report on World Population Ageing: 1950-2050 (ST/ESA/SER.A/207). This report, which was made available to the Commission, provided a solid demographic foundation for the debates of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. It will also serve as a useful tool for the upcoming follow-up activities of the World Assembly.

20. The Commission on the Status of Women in its agreed conclusions on "Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world" stressed the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into the preparations, work and outcome to emanate from the Second World Assembly on Ageing. It welcomed the involvement of all women in its work, and encouraged the inclusion of women in delegations to the World Assembly. It emphasized that recognition should be given to the contribution of older women and special attention paid to their empowerment and well-being.

21. The Statistical Commission at its thirty-third session approved actions by the United Nations Statistics Division to support population and housing censuses, which include information on age structure, to be undertaken by countries between 2005 and 2014.[7] The Commission for Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session addressed issues relating to older persons in a number of resolutions, for example, resolution 2002/30 entitled "Human rights and extreme poverty", resolution 2002/52 entitled "Elimination of violence against women" and resolution 2002/74 entitled "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)".

22. In view of their cross-cutting nature, ageing-related issues should continue to be considered by the commissions in their work. The Council can further promote coherence and coordination with and among the functional commissions in that regard (recommendation 3 (i)).

3. Eradication of poverty

23. In its resolution 2001/27, the Council invited its relevant functional commissions to assess the impact of particular policies on achieving poverty eradication goals, and to identify good practices and lessons learned so as to increase the sharing of knowledge, including among functional commissions themselves. Poverty eradication has received considerable attention by the commissions in 2002. Also, the relationship between poverty and sustainable development — a key issue before the World Summit on Sustainable Development — has been addressed by the United Nations Forum on Forests. The outcomes of the work of these bodies, particularly the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights, provide the Council with a wide range of policy inputs that can greatly enrich its contribution to the development of integrated policy guidance for eradicating poverty, building on the United Nations Millennium Declaration. By identifying linkages and promoting policy coherence, the Council can further enhance its contribution to achieving this overarching goal.

24. Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration and its development goals, especially in poverty reduction, the Commission for Social Development emphasized, in its agreed conclusions,[8] that social development requires that economic activity be accompanied by deliberate policies to reduce inequalities in the distribution of wealth and achieve more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth within and among nations. It invited Governments to adopt holistic, integrated, comprehensive and consistent public policies to further development and eradicate poverty. A Chairperson's summary of the high-level governmental and expert panel discussion (see chap. II, para. 25, of the Commission's report) pointed to the public actions required to effectively advance socio-economic objectives. Linkages were highlighted between investment in human capital and economic growth as well as the importance of an integrated approach for poverty eradication, employment promotion and social integration.

25. The Commission on the Status of Women agreed on a broad range of recommendations focused on the eradication of poverty among women, primarily through their empowerment, and calling attention to gender perspectives in all poverty eradication efforts. It suggested actions to eliminate obstacles to women's empowerment, and to address women's poverty through measures in different economic and social areas, ranging from health and education to fiscal and taxation policies, and access to productive resources and capital. The Commission highlighted the need for such action to address the situation of women throughout the life cycle. It also urged all actors to ensure that all actions to achieve the poverty eradication goals established in the United Nations Millennium Declaration include the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle.

26. The United Nations Forum on Forests underscored the importance of advancing sustainable forest management as a way to alleviate poverty and stem land and forest degradation. It called especially for initiatives to address the needs of those parts of the world that currently suffer from poverty and the highest rates of deforestation and where international cooperation would be welcome by affected Governments (see A/CONF.199/PC/8, annex, para. 15 (f)). The Forum also highlighted a number of lessons learned through the exchange of country experiences, for example, that integrating rural development programmes and livelihood programmes with national forest programmes, consistent with national development plans, can reduce poverty and combat deforestation and forest degradation.

27. The Statistical Commission endorsed the work programme of the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics in measuring poverty. The main objectives of the expert group are to harness the experience and concerns of different groups and organizations working on the measurement, interpretation and use of poverty statistics. The Commission encouraged the Rio Group to produce a compendium on poverty measurement after wider consultations with countries, to make sure it is of use to those most in need.[9] The Commission on Narcotic Drugs stressed the importance of integrating programmes for alternative development in drug control and development cooperation into broader strategies aimed at the alleviation of poverty.[10]

28. As in previous years, the Commission on Human Rights continued to address questions of human rights and poverty and adopted a number of resolutions on poverty-related issues, for example, resolution 2002/21 on "Adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living", resolution 2002/25 on "The right to food" and resolution 2002/30 on "Human rights and extreme poverty". It also considered the reports of the special rapporteurs on these issues (E/CN.4/2002/59 and Corr.1, E/CN.4/2002/58 and Add.1, and E/CN.4/2002/55) and reaffirmed, in particular, the commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to spare no effort in the fight against extreme poverty (para. 11) and to halve by the year 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger (para. 19). The Commission recommended (resolution 2002/30, para. 11) that the Council endorse its decision to renew for two years the mandate of the independent expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty. It also reiterated (resolution 2002/25, para. 9) the request to the Special Rapporteur on the right to food to contribute effectively to the medium-term review in June 2002 of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Food Summit (recommendation 3 (e)).

4. Health and education

29. Several commissions paid particular attention to basic health and education services for all as integral elements in the eradication of poverty. The analysis by the commissions will be of particular use for the Council at its 2002 high-level segment.

30. Inviting Governments to adopt holistic and consistent policies to further development and attain United Nations Millennium Declaration development goals, the Commission for Social Development especially focused on the productive value of investments in the social sector.

31. The Commission on Human Rights (resolution 2002/31, second preambular paragraph) reaffirmed that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is a human right and that such a right derives from the inherent dignity of the human person. It appointed a Special Rapporteur whose mandate will focus on this right (ibid., para. 4). The Commission also called for a range of measures to give effect to the right to education. It notably stressed the importance of improving the quality of education (resolution 2002/23, para. 4 (c)). The Special

Rapporteur of the Commission on the right to education was asked to intensify her efforts to identify ways and means to overcome obstacles in the realization of the right to education (ibid., para. 5).

32. The Commission on the Status of Women urged Governments and other relevant parties to improve and develop physical and mental health programmes and services, including preventive health care, for women.[11] It urged Governments and other relevant parties to ensure access to adequate, affordable and accessible public and social services to meet the needs of all women, in particular women living in poverty; and also requested them to ensure full and equal access at all levels to formal and non-formal education and training for women and girls, including pregnant adolescents and adolescent mothers, as key to their empowerment.

33. The Statistical Commission welcomed a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on health statistics and requested WHO to strengthen coordination of its statistical programme with the statistical work of the involved international organizations and countries.[12] The Statistical Commission recognized the need for a more systematic development of social statistics and welcomed the plans of the Siena Group for Social Statistics to consider a range of topical issues in social statistics that had hitherto been less developed in comparison with economic statistics.[13]

HIV/AIDS

34. The work of the commissions is contributing to ensuring that HIV/AIDS receives the urgent and continuous attention of the international community. The Commission for Social Development, for instance, underscored the devastating effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on public health, the economy and the educational system, particularly in some of the least developed countries in Africa. The Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development pointed to HIV/AIDS in Africa as one of the main areas of concern for the effective implementation of Agenda 21.

35. The Commission on the Status of Women stressed that gender equality and the empowerment of women are fundamental elements in the reduction of the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS (see the revised draft resolution entitled "Women, the girl child and human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (E/CN.6/2002/L.3/Rev.1)). It invited the Secretary-General in his reports on HIV/AIDS to take into account a gender perspective.

36. The Commission on Population and Development requested that the Population Division, in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS) and other relevant funds, programmes and agencies, strengthen its work on the demographic aspects and impact of HIV/AIDS.[14]

37. Recognizing that HIV/AIDS constitutes one of the most serious potential harms of drug abuse,[15] the Commission on Narcotic Drugs addressed the growing spread of HIV/AIDS associated with drug abuse in several parts of the world. It focused in particular on activities to address comprehensively demand reduction, ranging from discouraging initial drug use to reducing the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse for the individual and society as a whole.

38. Several commissions noted the importance of continuous public awareness programme on HIV/AIDS. For example, the Commission on Human Rights addressed preventive education against HIV/AIDS (resolution 2002/23, para. 4 (c)). The Commission furthermore urged States, international financial institutions and the private sector to take urgent measures to alleviate the debt problem of those developing countries particularly affected by HIV/AIDS, so that more financial resources could be released and used for health care, research and treatment of the population in the affected countries (resolution 2002/29, para. 18). It called upon all States to pursue policies to promote the availability of pharmaceuticals and medical technologies to treat HIV/AIDS (resolution 2002/32, para. 2 (a)) (recommendations 1, 2, 3 (f) and 4).

C. Recommendations

39. The following recommendations are offered for the consideration of the Council.

1. The Council may wish to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the relevance of the work of its functional commissions to the key issues of the United Nations Millennium Declaration

and thus as inputs to the Assembly's discussion on implementing the Millennium Declaration.

2. The Council may wish to note the contribution of its functional commissions to its high-level segment and build on their inputs in its ministerial declaration.

3. The Council may wish to invite its functional commissions to:

(a) Build on the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development, and of the Council's joint meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, in their work on financial and trade issues and on the enabling environment for development;

(b) Continue to integrate the Millennium Declaration follow-up in their own work programmes;

(c) Pay special attention to the goal of integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as a contribution to the follow-up of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

(d) Devote greater attention to the situation of Africa and the least developed countries, and thus help to review progress in implementing the outcomes of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in their area of concern;

(e) Enhance their efforts to address specific aspects of poverty eradication related to their work programmes within an integrated and coordinated approach;

(f) Pay particular attention from their respective perspectives to the fight against HIV/AIDS, taking into account the implementation of the recommendations of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and of the Council's high-level segment of 2002, and thus contribute to the Council's biannual consideration of HIV/AIDS in 2003;

(g) Exchange information on the outcomes of their consideration of information and communication technologies (ICT). The Council could encourage its commissions to make contributions to the World Summit on the Information Society;

(h) Further increase their efforts to mainstream gender perspectives within their areas of responsibility, and to draw the Council's attention to achievements and challenges in this regard;

(i) Draw on each other's work in addressing ageing-related issues. The consolidated report would address ageing-related issues in 2003 to help develop complementary approaches in this regard to ensure an effective and efficient implementation of and follow-up to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

4. The Council could invite the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on health and education to take into account the ministerial declaration of its 2002 high-level segment in their future work, cooperating fully with the concerned United Nations organizations.

II. Procedural aspects of the work of the commissions in 2002

A. Developments regarding the multi-year work programmes of the functional commissions in 2002

40. In 2002, most of the functional commissions continued to implement their multi-year programmes of work, and some continued to hold debates on special themes. This is reflected in summarized form in conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3. The Statistical Commission adopted a new multi-year programme of work extending to 2005. The World Summit on Sustainable Development is expected to lead to the preparations of a new work programme for the Commission on Sustainable Development.

B. Analysis of the practice of the functional commissions in the preparation of draft resolutions for action by the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly[16]

41. The practice of the commissions in adopting agreed conclusions, resolutions and decisions in their areas of responsibility, or submitting them for adoption by the Council or the General Assembly, varies

considerably among the different commissions. The specific practice of each commission is reflected in conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3.

42. Most commissions adopt resolutions and decisions covering various aspects of their work. These resolutions are either adopted by the commissions within their own terms of reference or recommended to the Council or the General Assembly for adoption. The number of resolutions adopted or submitted to the Council or the Assembly differ considerably among the commissions, with some commissions forwarding few or no resolutions, and others submitting the majority of their draft proposals to the Council or the Assembly. Most commissions also adopt, usually within their own purview, decisions related to procedural and organizational matters.

43. Overall, there is no homogeneous practice carried out by the commissions in preparing and submitting their draft resolutions. Each commission's practice has evolved over the years and each commission has developed its own customs and rules in that regard. It is, however, common practice of functional commissions to recommend, each year, to the Council the adoption of a draft decision containing the report of the current session of the commission including the provisional agenda and the documentation for the next session of the commission.

44. The outcomes of the commissions' annual sessions also differ with regard to the main thematic issues discussed by the various commissions. The Commission on the Status of Women, for instance, submits its agreed conclusions on the thematic issues to the Council for endorsement. For the past several years, the Commission for Social Development adopted agreed conclusions on its priority themes, which it brought to the attention of the Council, but is currently keeping under review the type of outcome it desires to have each year. The Statistical Commission only occasionally prepares resolutions and, during its annual sessions, it draws the attention of the Council to decisions and recommendations taken under each agenda item. A number of commissions adopt their own resolutions, or recommend draft resolutions for adoption by the Council or the General Assembly related to the thematic issues considered at their annual sessions.

45. Most commissions prepare multi-year programmes of work, but the process for adopting these programmes also varies among the functional commissions. Some commissions, such as the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, prepare draft resolutions on their multi-year programmes of work for adoption by the Council. The United Nations Forum on Forests adopted its own resolution in that regard and brought it to the attention of the Council.[17] The Commission on Population and Development had adopted a decision on special themes for the years 2001-2003, which it brought to the attention of the Council.[18] At each session, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs usually choose the specific themes to be addressed during the next session. The Statistical Commission adopts a revised four-year rolling plan at each annual session.

46. Apart from agreed conclusions, resolutions and decisions, a further important outcome of the annual sessions of some commissions are summaries of the debates. These summaries provide the key points on the discussions held during commission sessions and are a major tool for sharing information among the commissions. Some commissions, like the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Forum on Forests, include chairman's summaries of their high-level segments and multi-stakeholder dialogues in the reports of their sessions. Other commissions' reports contain chairperson's/moderator's summaries of the panel discussions or general summaries on the debates.

47. In order to achieve a more consistent approach in the preparation of draft proposals, the Council could encourage the commissions to take into account the three-tiered intergovernmental system, consisting of the General Assembly, the Council and the functional commissions, when preparing their resolutions and decisions. In this three-tiered system, the Assembly is the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, and the Council has an overall guidance and coordination function, whereas the commissions play the primary role in the implementation of and follow-up to their various programmes of work.

48. In this regard, the commissions should, in proposing their multi-year programmes and in identifying themes for their sessions, take into account the work programmes and themes of other functional commissions. They should, in their draft

recommendations and resolutions proposed for adoption by the Council, identify areas and issues that have linkages and relevance to aspects of the work of other functional commissions. In their recommendations on the follow-up to conference outcomes, the commissions should also identify areas that call for action by the Council with a view to promoting a more coordinated and integrated approach to conference follow-up. Within the agreed outputs, the functional commissions should clearly identify any recommendations that have coordination or programmatic implications for the United Nations.[19]

49. Such an approach would enhance complementarities and coherence in the work of the functional commissions and advance their work as well as the outcome of their annual sessions. At the same time, the work of the General Assembly and the Council would become more effective and efficient, as they could focus on their respective areas of expertise in dealing only with aspects of draft proposals related to their responsibilities.

C. Recommendations

50. The following recommendations are offered for the consideration of the Council.

1. The commissions should, in their draft recommendations and resolutions proposed for adoption by the Council, identify areas and issues that have linkages and relevance to aspects of the work of other functional commissions.

2. In their recommendations on the follow-up to conference outcomes, the commissions should also identify areas that call for action by the Council with a view to promoting a coordinated and integrated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits. Within the agreed outputs, the functional commissions should clearly identify any recommendations that have coordination or programmatic implications for the United Nations.[20]

D. Working methods, including intersessional activities[21]

1. Working methods

51. Most of the functional commissions closely examined their working methods, either intersessionally, or during their sessions in 2002.[22]

52. In an effort to improve its working methods, the Commission on Human Rights was guided by a note by the Secretariat (E/CN.4/2002/16) entitled "Main rules and practices followed by the Commission on Human Rights in the organization of its work and the conduct of business". While bearing in mind that the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council remained applicable in all circumstances, the document provided practical provisions governing procedural issues.

53. The Commission on Population and Development traditionally reviews its working methods and makes recommendations during intersessional meetings of its Bureau. In November 2001, the Bureau adopted recommendations concerning the organization of work and working methods for the 2002 session of the Commission (see E/CN.9/2002/CRP.1, annex III). It also adopted recommendations concerning the work programme for future sessions of the Commission, and the work programmes of the Bureau and the Secretariat in the field of population (ibid.).

54. After the session of the Commission for Social Development in 2001, the Bureau of the Commission decided to undertake a preliminary assessment of the possibilities for improving the Commission's working methods. In January 2002, the Bureau convened open-ended informal consultations with member States. Members had before them a number of recommendations of the Bureau, as well as proposals by the Secretariat for improving the Commission's methods of work.

55. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its decision 45/102,[23] requested its Bureau to undertake, with the assistance of its secretariat, the preparatory work necessary for a further discussion of its working methods at its forty-sixth session in 2002. Specific measures taken to improve its working methods are outlined in the sections below.

2. Intersessional activities

56. Intersessional activities now form an important part of the work programme of many of the functional commissions. In some instances, such activities may involve only the convening of the commission bureau or extended bureau. Mostly, these meetings are held on an ad hoc basis, usually to prepare for upcoming sessions.

57. The Commission on the Status of Women met intersessionally to prepare for its 2002 session. In an effort to promote coordination in specific substantive areas, the Statistical Commission has established groups of experts from countries acting as "Friends of the Chair" to facilitate the Commission's work intersessionally. A meeting of an expanded Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights will be held to discuss issues such as the organization of work for its session in 2003. Both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held several intersessional meetings of their respective extended Bureaux to seek ways to strengthen their role in addressing the organizational, substantive and policy-related matters to be considered at their sessions in 2002.

3. Panels of experts

58. Some of the functional commissions held expert panel discussions during their sessions, usually featuring experts with a broad range of expertise on issues addressed by the commission for that year. For example, in 2002, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on Population and Development held expert panels on their priority themes. The Commission on the Status of Women held two panel discussions, one on each of its priority themes for 2002. In addition, as part of preparations for that session and its thematic issues, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat organized two expert group meetings in New Delhi, India, and Ankara, Turkey. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held an expert panel meeting relating to its priority theme on the reform of the criminal justice system. The Statistical Commission uses groups of experts from countries (called city groups) to develop methodology in specific substantive areas that are then considered by the Commission.

4. Sharing of national experiences

59. Few commissions have taken steps to promote focused and interactive sharing of national experience, despite the fact that the Council "urge(d) its functional commissions to further develop opportunities for sharing national experience during annual sessions, in particular with regard to the implementation of conference outcomes, and to allocate an appropriate amount of time for that purpose at their annual sessions" (resolution 2001/27,[1] para. 9). The Commission on Population and Development included in the agenda of its thirty-fifth session a general debate on national experience in population matters relating to its priority themes. The Statistical Commission considers reports on national experiences in dealing with state-of-the-art statistical issues (most recently, definitions and measurement of electronic commerce). The Commission on the Status of Women adopted a decision entitled "Further organizational matters of the Commission on the Status of Women" (E/CN.6/2002/L.8) aimed at further developing opportunities for sharing national experiences during its annual session (recommendation 1 (a)).

5. Civil society participation

60. Non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society groups actively participate in the work of the functional commissions. Their participation is normally restricted to making statements relating to issues under discussion in the commission, or as members of panel discussions held during the session. Some functional commissions have an extremely strong presence of non-governmental organizations. The fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights was attended by a total of 247 non-governmental organizations involving 2,077 individuals.

6. Role of the Bureau

61. The importance of the role that the bureaux of the functional commissions play in the preparations for commission sessions has been highlighted in section C.1 above.

62. A number of commissions have made an effort to ensure continuity of their bureaux. For example, the United Nations Forum on Forests has, for its first two sessions, made sure that at least one member of the Bureau continued as a bureau member. The Statistical

Commission makes an effort to retain the same Bureau members in successive years, particularly the Chairperson. To strengthen the role of the bureau in the preparation of commission sessions, a number of commissions have revised the procedure for election of their bureau members. The Commission for Social Development, in 2002, recommended to the Council the adoption of a decision to change the timing of the elections of members of its Bureau. Accordingly, the Bureau of the forty-first session of the Commission was being elected after the closure of the fortieth session. Likewise, the Commission on the Status of Women decided to elect the new Bureau at the end of commission sessions, rather than at the beginning (see draft decision E/CN.6/2002/L.6 entitled "Election of the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women". The Commission on Narcotic Drugs elects its new Bureau at the end of each session so as to have it in place for intersessional activities and to provide continuous policy guidance to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

E. Coordination among functional commissions and their secretariats

63. The functional commissions continue to enhance coordination on issues of mutual concern through a variety of means, the most common of which being the exchange of reports and other documents, the addressing by a chairperson of another commission, and the holding of joint meetings between the bureaux of two commissions.

1. Interaction among commissions

64. The functional commissions continued to increase their interaction during 2002. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women has so far held two joint Bureau meetings via videoconference with the Commission on Human Rights. A third meeting has been planned for later in 2002. For the fifth year in a row, its Chairperson also addressed the Commission on Human Rights under the agenda item entitled "Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective". In an effort to increase the sharing of the outcome of the work of the functional commissions, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women transmitted its agreed conclusions on relevant topics to the Chairperson of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the Commission for Social Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

65. The Chairperson of the Commission for Social Development forwarded to the Chairman of the Commission on Population and Development the agreed conclusion of its fortieth session on "Integration of social and economic policy" for information. The agreed conclusions were also transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

66. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice cooperates with the Commission on Human Rights on issues related to human rights standards and norms in the administration of justice and crime prevention and the principles of restorative justice. It continues to work very closely with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and has greatly benefited from the increased synergies that exist between their two secretariats which now provide a common servicing for both commissions.

67. The Chairperson of the Commission on Population and Development was in written communication with the Chairpersons of the other commissions to brief them on the work programme of the Commission and to share the outcome of their work. Since the establishment of the United Nations Forum on Forests, its Bureau has regularly met with the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development to discuss, primarily, how the issue of deforestation could be included in the World Summit on Sustainable Development process.

68. The Statistical Commission continues to circulate, to the secretariats of the other functional commissions, relevant extracts of its reports for their information. It also reviewed reports on the work of the Commission on Population and Development and the Commission on Sustainable Development relevant for the work of the Statistical Commission.

2. Cooperation at the Secretariat level

69. The secretariats of the functional commissions continue to play a pivotal role in facilitating cooperation among the functional commissions, through the joint preparation of reports, the circulating of relevant information to other commissions and the

drawing of the attention of other commissions to work undertaken that could be of interest to them. To a large extent, this interaction is bilateral in nature, involving just two commissions, and very rarely three or more.

70. For example, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women received a communication from the secretariat of the Commission on Population and Development, drawing attention to reports that had been, and would be, prepared for that Commission and that could be of interest to the Commission on the Status of Women. The Division for the Advancement of Women (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) replied by highlighting upcoming thematic issues that could be of relevance to the work of the Commission on Population and Development.

71. The secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests maintains close links with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Currently, one staff member of the Commission secretariat is seconded to the Forum secretariat in order to ensure close coordination of issues relevant to both commissions.

72. The Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women have, for a number of years, cooperated closely on many issues through their respective secretariats. This is reflected in an annual joint work plan, which is prepared by them and submitted each year to both commissions (see E/CN.4/2002/82-E/CN.6/2002/6).

73. The practice of Secretariat representatives' briefing commissions on the work of their commission or secretariat continues to be another important form of cooperation. For example, the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development/Department of Economic and Social Affairs addressed other commissions, such as the Commission on Population and Development, on the work of the Commission for Social Development. The Director of the Population Division and a representative of the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) addressed the Commission on the Status of Women on "Follow-up to Council resolutions and decisions" in respect of issues relating to their respective commissions' work within the context of gender perspectives. In addition, on a regular basis, the Directors of the divisions within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which serve as secretariats to the functional commissions, meet to discuss and coordinate activities.

F. Cooperation with the Council (outcomes of joint bureaux meetings)

74. As requested by the Council (resolutions 1998/46 and 2001/27), annual meetings took place once again in 2002 between the Council Bureau and the bureaux of its functional commissions.[24] The meetings focused on the work of the commissions in 2002, the possible contributions of commissions to the work of the Council, and the follow-up to the Council's guidance. Detailed information on the outcome of these meetings is reflected in conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3.

75. In particular, the contributions by the functional commissions to major conferences and events were discussed in each of the joint bureaux meetings and could be further encouraged by the Council (recommendation 1 (b)). Generally, the meetings reconfirmed that the interaction between the Council and the functional commissions is important for advancing the information exchange between the Council and its commissions. However, it would appear useful for future meetings to focus on specific issues, and involve the bureaux of two or several commissions (recommendation 1 (c)).

G. Recommendation

76. The following recommendation is offered for the consideration of the Council.

1. The Council may wish to:

(a) Reiterate its call on the functional commissions to further develop opportunities for sharing national experience during annual sessions;

(b) Encourage its functional commissions to exchange information and views on their follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits on a more systematic basis, identifying areas where complementarities could be enhanced;

(c) Welcome the outcomes of joint bureaux meetings held in 2002; invite its Bureau to convene meetings with members of the bureaux of several functional commissions in 2003 on issues of concern to the functional commissions and the Council (for

example, working methods, themes of the Council's high-level or coordination segments); invite the functional commissions to address the themes of the high-level and coordination segments, depending on the themes of these segments; organize a meeting of its Bureau with the chairpersons of several functional commissions.

Notes

[1] Mandate: ECOSOC resolution 1998/46.

[2] Eight of the nine functional commissions of the Council met in 2002, as did the United Nations Forum on Forests. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development did not meet in 2002. The Commission on Sustainable Development met in 2002 as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Its work in that regard is briefly addressed by the report. In resolution 56/206, the General Assembly decided to transform the Commission on Human Settlements into the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Given the new status of this body as a subsidiary body of the Assembly, reporting through the Council, its work will no longer be covered by the consolidated report, which focuses on the functional commissions.

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will hold its first substantive session from 13 to 24 May 2002. As the Forum is a subsidiary body of the Council, its work will be included in the next consolidated report.

[3] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[4] See the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to, and progress in, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (E/2002/66).

[5] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolution Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[6] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 4* (E/2002/24), para. 48 (c) and (g).

[7] Ibid., Summary, para. (a).

[8] Ibid., *Supplement No. 6* (E/2002/26), chap. I, sect. D, resolution 40/1, annex.

[9] Ibid., *Supplement No. 4* (E/2002/24), para. 15 (a) and (b).

[10] Ibid., *Supplement No. 8* and corrigendum (E/2002/28 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. C, resolution 45/14.

[11] See agreed conclusions of the Commission on "Eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle in a globalizing world".

[12] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 4* (E/2002/24), paras. 11 and 12 (a).

[13] Ibid., para. 18 (a) and (b).

[14] Ibid., *Supplement No. 5* (E/2002/25), chap. I, sect. B, resolution 2002/1, para. 2.

[15] Ibid., *Supplement No. 8* and corrigendum (E/2002/28 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. C, resolution 45/1 on HIV/AIDS in the context of drug abuse.

[16] In resolution 2001/27, the Council requested the Secretary-General to include, in the next consolidated report, an analysis of the practice of its functional commissions in the preparation of draft resolutions for action by the Council or the General Assembly with a view to elaborating guidelines addressed to the functional commissions on the submission of draft proposals to the Council.

[17] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1), part two, chap. I, sect. B, resolution 1/1.

[18] Ibid., *2000, Supplement No. 5* (E/2000/25), chap. I, sect. B, decision 2000/1.

[19] See Council resolution 1998/46, annex II.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Council resolution 1998/46 called on the functional commissions to review their methods of work and made several suggestions as to how to strengthen them. The Council, in its resolution 2001/27, further encouraged the commissions to continue to keep their working methods under review. Efforts made by functional commissions to improve their working methods have also been reflected in earlier consolidated reports (see E/2001/95, in particular paras. 75-96; and E/2000/85, in particular paras. 65-70).

[22] For details, see conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3.

[23] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7* (E/2001/27), chap. I, sect. B.

[24] A listing of these meetings can be found in conference room paper E/2002/CRP.3.